THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) ; (a) Government have seen reports of some violence against members of the minority communities in Bangladesh.

(b) The Bangladesh Government have assured our High Com mission in Dhaka that the interests of the minorities in that country will be safeguarded.

Indo-Nepal Meeting

4422. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the first Indo-Nepal meeting has been held in Kathmandu in the second week of August, 1988;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) ; (a) The first meeting of the Indo-Nepal Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on the 13th August, 1988.

(b) The meeting discussed organisational matters regarding the functioning of the Joint Commission.

(c) It was decided to appoint three Sub-Commissions—on Trade and Transit, on Economic and Industrial Cooperation, and on Water Resources-to deal with various subjects of economic cooperation.

Jobs for Blind in Central Government

4423. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the number of jobs which have been made available for blinds in A and B Groups in the Central Government Services during the last one year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Since there is no reservation for the physically handicapped (including the Blind) in Group 'A' & Group 'B' services ,the statistical information not centrally monitored and is, therefore, not readily available.

Purchase of Blankets for Army

4424. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the purchase of blankets for use by the Army from the NTC and BIC are causing huge losses to the national exchequer because of procurement of the same by the NTC and BIC from private companies instead of manufacturing there;

(b) if so, the details of the requirements of the blankets for the Army and its policy of purchases ; and

(c) what steps have been taken to avoid inflated prices due to procurement from private companies by Government undertakings and supplying the same to the Army?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) The annual requirements of the Army are worked out on the basis of Annual Provision Review. To the extent of the capacity of the Ordinance Factories orders for procurement of blankets are placed on them. Thereafter, orders are booked on NTC/BIC upto their production capacity. The balance requirements, it any, are procured from trade through DGS&D. NTC/BIC have confirmed that no large scale purchase of blankets was resorted to by them from private companies.

Armed Light Helicopter

4425. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress in the manufacture of Armed Light Helicopter; and

(b) when will it be pressed into service ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) and (b) HAL has not taken up the manufacture of an Armed Light Helicopter. They are, however, engaged in the design and development of an Advanced Light Helicopter, which may be productionised in the 1990s.

Assistance for Remote Sensing Centre at Ludhiana

4426. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL :Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assistance has been given to Punjab State for strengthening the Remote Sensing Centre at Ludhina; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) if not, whether there is any proposal in this regard and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department of Space (DOS) has extended to the Punjab Government assistance in technical as well as organizational areas for the establishment of the State Remote Sensing Application Centre at Ludhiana. The Department is extending continued support through its representatives, who are members of the Governing Body of the Centre.

Plot to Murder Political Leaders/ Prime Minister

4427. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state the steps initiated by the Government of India with the Government of Pakistan and other international bodies following the findings relating to incriminating documents on the plots for murdering Indian political leaders including the Prime Minister ?